

Do not complete pupils' answers

One way to ensure you maintain high expectations of pupil responses is to ensure you ask follow-up questions to an incomplete answer rather than completing the answer for the pupils.

Often teachers, unknowingly, complete or 'round-up' pupils incomplete answers and then reward the pupil for their answer even though it wasn't entirely their response. The interaction below provides an example of this.

Example

Teacher: How do I know that the answer will be an integer if I divide 1230 by 10?

Pupil: Because it ends in a zero.

Teacher: Right. 1230 ends in a zero meaning it is a multiple of 10.

In the example above, the teacher has added extra information but still indicated the pupil gave the correct response. The consequence is that pupils believe they are right and fully understand when they may not.

Supporting pupils to develop their response

It can be difficult not to round-up pupils answers as you want to keep the pace of the lesson and praise pupils for sharing their ideas. However, if you don't address partially correct answers and probe for more detail, you have lowered your expectations of pupils and don't provide them with an opportunity to extend their learning. Therefore, it is important to ask follow-up questions to enable the pupil to complete or build upon their answer.

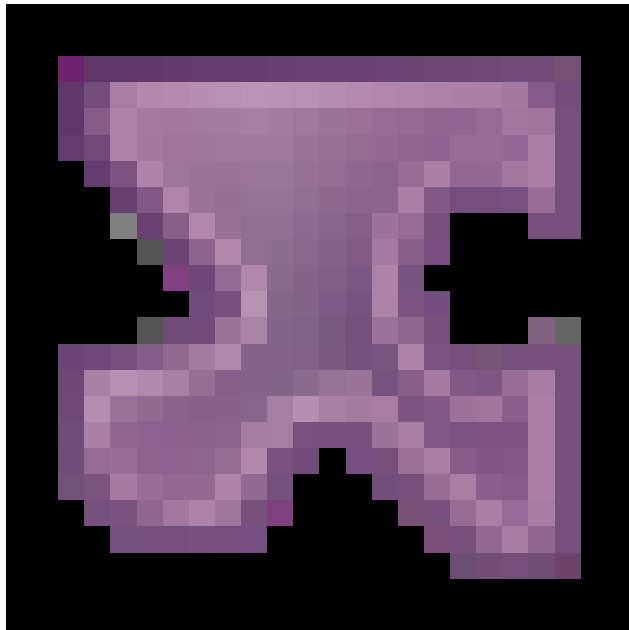
To support you to know when a pupil's answer is incomplete, you should ensure you know what a good answer would be before asking the question. For example, it may be that the pupils need to give three specific pieces of information. Knowing this helps you identify exactly what you want pupils to say. Then, if they don't provide you with a complete answer, you can ask further questions. Ways you can further probe a pupil's thinking will be explored in the following section.

Do not complete pupils' answers in action

Watch one of the videos below to see how a teacher probes pupils to provide more detail in their answers and consider the questions below. You can record your responses in the [notes tab](#) (or your own notebook).

- How did the teacher respond to the partially complete answer?
- What impact did this have on the pupil's response?

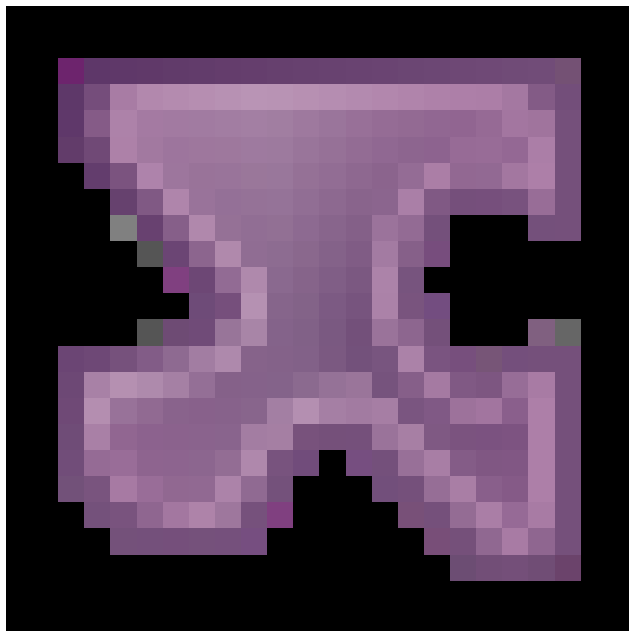
Early years



Direct Link: [Do not complete pupils' answers - Early Years](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Do not complete pupils' answers - Early Years](#)

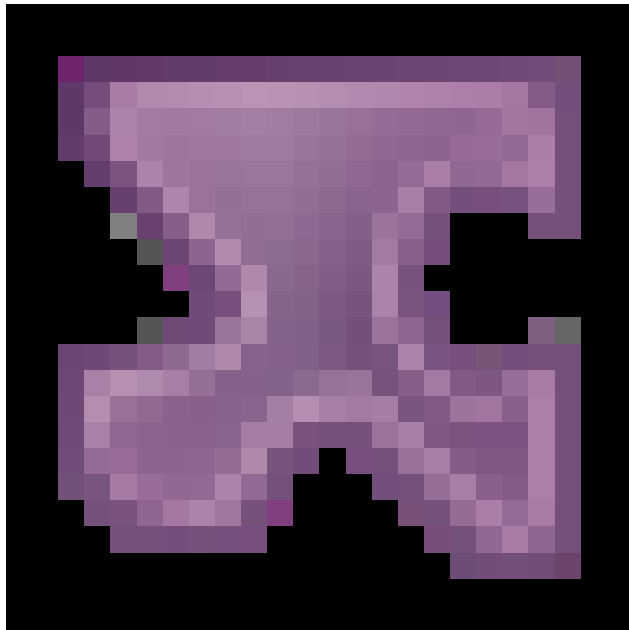
Primary



Direct Link: [Do not complete pupils' answers - Primary](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Do not complete pupils' answers - Primary](#)

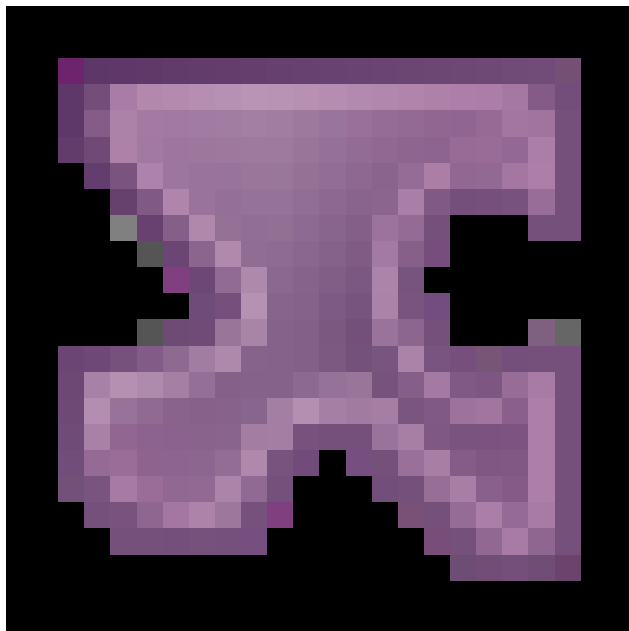
Secondary



Direct Link: [Do not complete pupils' answers - Secondary](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Do not complete pupils' answers - Secondary](#)

Specialist

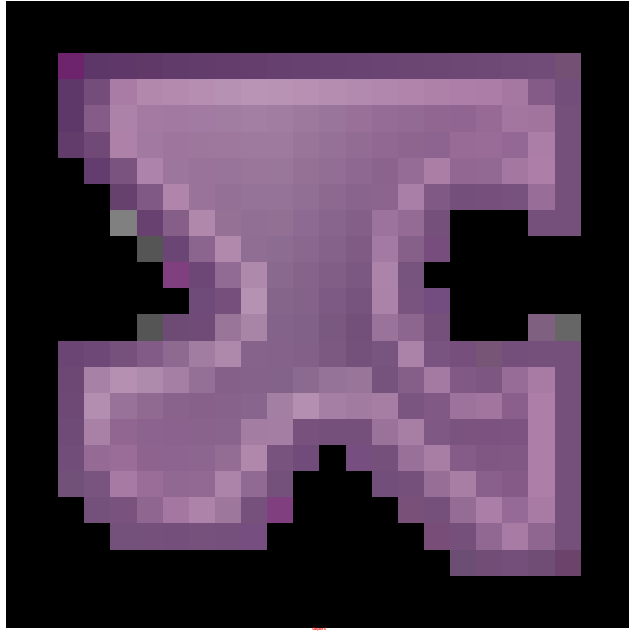


Direct Link: [Do not complete pupils' answers - Specialist](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Do not complete pupils' answers - Specialist](#)

Hear from a teacher

Listen to Robert Gardener talking through why he ensures he does not complete pupils' answers and an example of when he probed a pupil to provide more detail.



Direct Link: [Do not complete pupils' answers - Robert Gardner, Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust](#)

Transcript: [Do not complete pupils' answers - Robert Gardner, Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust](#)

Now that you understand why you should not complete pupils' answers for them, take some time to reflect on your teaching practice by completing the activity below.

Over to you!

Have you completed pupils' answers before? If so, answer the following questions and record your responses in the notes tab (or your own notebook):

- Why do you think you did it?
- How might it have impacted the pupil's understanding?
- What could you have asked instead?